

Message Text

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SUBJ: CURRENT MEDIA REACTION

IN RELATED EDITORIALS, ONE DEVOTED SPECIFICALLY TO PRESIDENT FORD'S MIDDLE EAST TALKS WITH PRESIDENT SADAT, ANOTHER CONCERNED WITH GOM MIDDLE EAST POLICY, WITH AN ASSESSMENT OF ME PROSPECTS IN GENERAL, A THIRD BRIEF COMMENTARY ON THE IMPACT OF PRESIDENT FORD'S ENTIRE VISIT AND A FINAL EDITORIAL CONCERNED SPECIFICALLY WITH SPAIN, PORTUGAL AND NATO, FOR DAILIES COMMENT AS FOLLOWS:

TIMES OF MALTA (CONSERVATIVE) OF JUNE 4, UNDER HEADING "M.E. PEACE PROSPECTS" COMMENTS:

"A NEW WAVE OF OPTIMISM SWEEPED THE MIDDLE EAST ON MONDAY AS U.S. PRESIDENT GERALD FORD AND HIS EGYPTIAN COUNTERPART, MR. ANWAR SADAT, ENDED A TWO-DAY SUMMIT IN SALZBURG, AUSTRIA, AND ISRAEL ANNOUNCED THAT IT WAS THINNING OUT ITS FORCES FROM THE GENERAL AREA OF THE SUEZ CANAL. MR. FORD AND MR. SADAT PLEDGED TO A CONTINUED EFFORT TO EAST AND FINALLY SOLVE THE COMPLEX SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST, HAVE ANNOUNCED NO NEW INITIATIVES. HOWEVER THE TWO LEADERS WERE AGREED THAT SOME NEW KIND OF INTERVENTION MUST TAKE PLACE BEFORE RECONVENING THE GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE.

MR. FORD IS MEETING THE ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER, MR. YITZHAK RABIN, LATER THIS MONTH. CLEARLY EFFORTS ARE IN PROGRESS TO PREVENT THE SITUATION FROM TURNING INTO A DANGEROUS STALEMATE. THE ISRAELI
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DECISION TO REDUCE ITS FORCES FROM THE SUEZ CANAL, A FEW DAYS BEFORE

THE REOPENING OF THE WATERWAY, IS BOTH A GESTURE OF GOODWILL AND A TACTICAL MILITARY MOVE.

IT REFLECTS AN INSTANT DEFUSING OF WHAT HAS OTHERWISE BEEN TERMED AS "AN EXPLOSIVE SITUATION" AFTER THE FAILURE OF THE KISSINGER MISSION. IT IS MEANT, AND THIS WILL PROBABLY COME ABOUT SOON, TO PRODUCE THE EGYPTIANS INTO MAKING A RECIPROCAL GESTURE, SUCH AS TO ALLOW THE TRANSIT OF ISRAELI SHIPPING THROUGH THE CANAL. THE OUTCOME OF THE FORD-SADAT TALKS AND THE ISRAELI GESTURE PROVIDE TAKE-OFF POINTS FOR FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS. IF THIS SPIRIT PREVAILS, THEN THE PROSPECTS OF ACHIEVING LASTING PEACE, ONLY A MIRAGE A FEW MONTHS AGO, ARE DEFINITELY BRIGHTER."

THE BULLETIN (CONSERVATIVE) OF JUNE 3 (EVENING), UNDER HEADING "MALTA AND THE MIDDLE EAST" COMMENTS:

"THE PRIME MINISTER HAS ENUNCIATED HIS GOVERNMENT'S STAND ON THE MIDDLE EAST. WITHOUT ELABORATING HE REASSERTED THAT THE MALTA GOVERNMENT FEELS THAT THERE CAN BE NO PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, UNLESS THE PALESTINIANS ARE GIVEN THEIR RIGHTS, AND ISRAEL WILL RETURN TO THE 1967 BORDERS.....

A RETURN TO THE 1967 BORDERS, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING, AND FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE WOULD SEEM OUT OF THE QUESTION. ISRAEL HAS LONG MAINTAINED THAT AFTER WHAT HAPPENED IN 1967 AND SINCE, THE ONLY WAY THAT SHE COULD AGREE TO PEACE WAS TO HAVE DEFENSIBLE BORDERS. THIS IS WHERE THE ISSUE WILL LIE, WHATEVER THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS, AS HAS BEEN ALREADY PROVED, AND IRRESPECTIVE OF WHAT OTHER GOVERNMENTS, INCLUDING MALTA, WOULD THINK IS THE RIGHT AND CORRECT SOLUTION. THE TROUBLE IS THAT IN ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, THE ISSUE IS RARELY SEEN IN ITS TRUE PERSPECTIVE, IS NOT SEEN AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF PLEDGES TO EXTERMINATE THE ISRAELIS, BUT SIMPLY AND SOLELY BECAUSE OF ATTEMPTS TO INGRATIATE ONESELF IN AN AREA WHERE SO MANY HOPE TO HAVE A SPHERE OF INFLUENCE.

LET NO ONE BE MISLED THAT THE LINE OF OIL SUPPLIES DOES NOT LURK IN THE MINDS AND BRAINS OF THE NEGOTIATORS - AT LEAST THOSE WHO DEPEND EVEN MORE ON MIDDLE EAST OIL. YET THE DIPLOMATS AND LEADING STATESMEN WOULD HAVE TO BE FULLY AWARE OF THE OTHER SIDE'S POINT

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OF VIEW. MALTA HAS DECLARED HER POLICY. IT IS NOT ALONG IN THIS LINE. BUT OTHERS, LESS PRAGMATIC, PERHAPS MORE WITH FEELINGS AND A SENSE OF WHAT IS RIGHT AGREE WITH ISRAEL, THAT DEFENSIBLE BORDERS, MUST REMAIN A SINE QUA NON IN ANY FUTURE PEACE THAT WILL HAVE A GUARANTEE OF STABILITY.

THERE HAVE BEEN MOVES BY ISRAEL TOWARDS PEACE, NOT TO PLACATE THE EMPTY BOASTS OF SELF-OPINION CRITICS, BUT IN THE SEARCH FOR PEACE

WHICH DOES NOT MEAN THE THROWING AWAY OF A COUNTRY'S SECURITY - PARTICULARLY IN THE LIGHT OF PAST EXPERIENCE. MALTA'S PRESENT STAND, AS ENUNCIATED BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THROWS HER OUT OF THE NEUTRALITY OF THE CONFLICT, NOT BECAUSE IT HAS NOT GOT THE RIGHT AND DUTY TO EXPRESS ITS STAND, BUT BECAUSE IT IS FELT IT IS TOO ONE SIDED TO BE CONSIDERED OTHERWISE."

IL-HAJJA (PRO-CHURCH) OF JUNE 4, DISCUSSING PRESIDENT FORD'S VISIT IN A COMMENTARY ENTITLED "NATO, EUROPE AND MALTA" OBSERVES:

".....

PRESIDENT FORD'S VISIT TO EUROPE IS ASSISTING IN HEALING OPEN WOUNDS. RELATIONS BETWEEN TURKEY AND GREECE HAVE AMELIORATED AND NATO CAN STILL DEFEND SOUTHEAST EUROPE. RELATIONS BETWEEN RUSSIA AND EGYPT HAVE WORSENERED AND PRESIDENT SADAT IS REALLY HOPPING THAT AMERICA, IN THE END, WILL FIND A SOLUTION TO THE DANGEROUS CONFLICT BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE ARABS. THE ENERGY POLICIES OF PRESIDENT FORD ARE RAISING HOPES AGAIN IN AMERICA. THE PROOF OF THE MATTER....HAS NOT YET COME, BUT THE SITUATION HAS TURNED TO A BRIGHTER SIDE.
....."

THE BULLETIN (CONSERVATIVE) OF JUNE 3 (EVENING), DISCUSSING NATO, SPAIN AND PORTUGAL, UNDER HEADING "THE RIGHT PERSPECTIVE" COMMENTS:

"IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT THE BRITISH PRIME MINISTER AND THE DUTCH PREMIER HAD BLOCKED THE ATTEMPT TO GET SPAIN INTO THE NATO ALLIANCE. SOME MEMORIES, EVEN IF MISGUIDED DE HARD....

WITH PORTUGAL ALL BUT GONE TO THE COMMUNIST SIDE, THE NEED OF A REAPPRAISAL OF THE ALLIANCE NEEDS SHOULD BE MORE THAN PARAMOUNT.... AFTER FIFTY YEARS THE SCENE HAS SHIFTED TO THE TIP OF THE IBERIAN
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PENINSULA, AND CONTROL OF THE ATLANTIC APPROACHES TO THE MEDITERRANEAN MEANS A GREAT DEAL TO ANY OVERALL APPRAISAL, PARTICULARLY NOW WHEN RUSSIA HAS SHOWN ITS NAVAL MIGHT THROUGHOUT THE WORLD SEAS.....

THE GRIM TRUTH IS THAT WITH NATIONS LOOKING INWARD RATHER THAN OUTWARD IN THEIR COMMITMENT, PARTICULARLY WHERE LEFT WINGERS DOMINATE, THE WHOLE PERSPECTIVE IS LOST. AS IF THE ALLIANCE IS NOT BESET BY TROUBLE, MORE THAN IT COULD COPE WITH. BIRN

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